GPRA Tutorial: Section 4 Program Performance Evaluation

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Program Performance Evaluation

Program evaluation, as used in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) is an assessment, through objective measurement and statistical analysis, of the manner and extent to which federal programs achieve intended objectives.

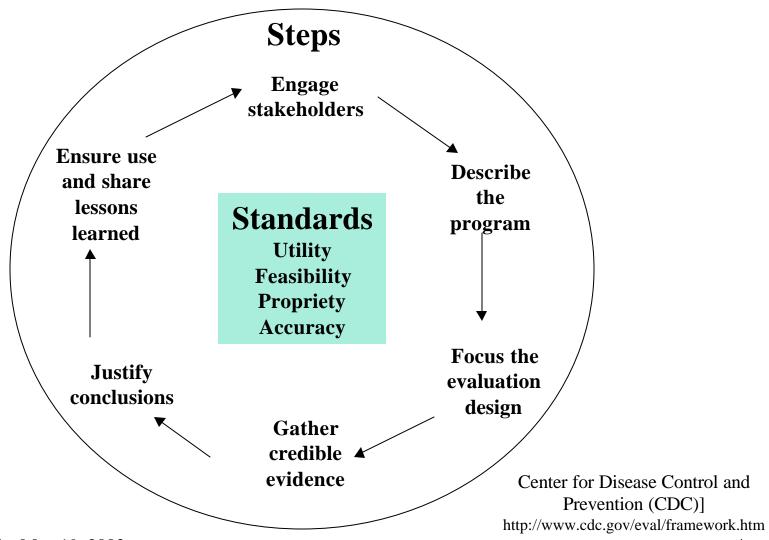
This is complementary to performance measurement, which is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly towards pre-established goals.

GAO/GGD-98-53

What is a program?

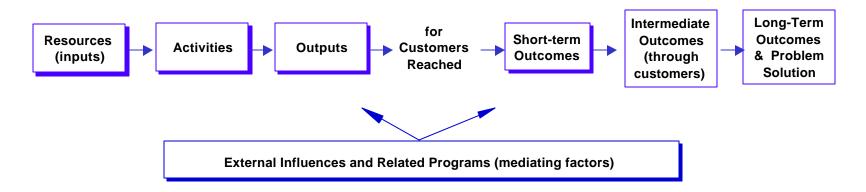
A program is an intentional allocation of resources in support of specific strategies or activities to produce defined products and/or services for a defined client group so that they will change their behavior which will lead to reducing strategic problems necessary to achieve the program's mission.

A Framework for Program Evaluation



Describe the program -the logic model tool

A logic model is a diagram and text that describe the key logical (causal) relationships among program elements and the problem to be solved, thus defining measurements of success.



Steps in the logic model process

- 1. Establish a stakeholder work group and collect documents.
- 2. Define the problem and context for the program.
- 3. Define elements of the logic in a table.
- 4. Develop a diagram of logical relationships.
- 5. Verify the logic with stakeholders.

Then

use the logic model to develop or confirm performance measures for program monitoring and performance contracts, and in planning and evaluation.

McLaughlin and Jordan,

Definitions

Resources: Human and financial resources as well as other inputs required to support the program. Partnerships and alliances might be included here.

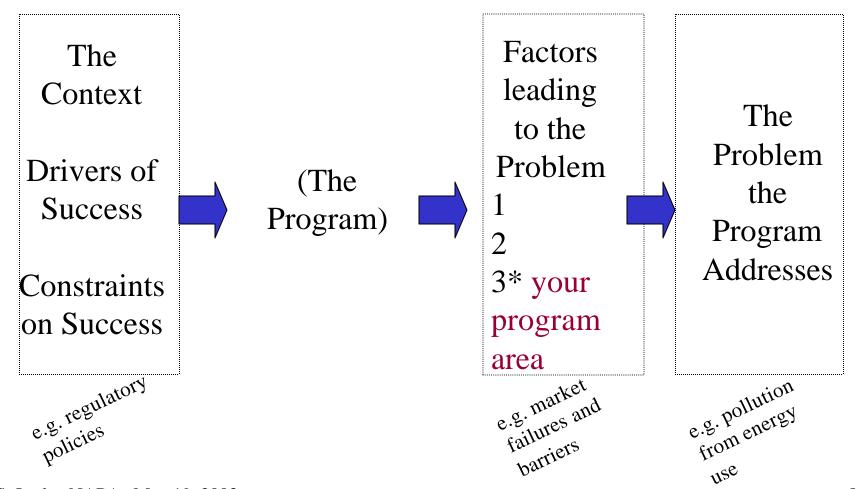
Activities: All those action steps necessary to produce program outputs; includes delivery mechanisms.

Outputs: the products, goods, and services provided to direct customers.

Outcomes: Effects of activities and outputs; resulting changes or benefits. Typically there are multiple, sequential outcomes. These are usually a restatement of program goals and objectives.

Context: Influences external to the program that may impact its success, antecedent (exist before the program begins and mediating (occur as the program is implemented).

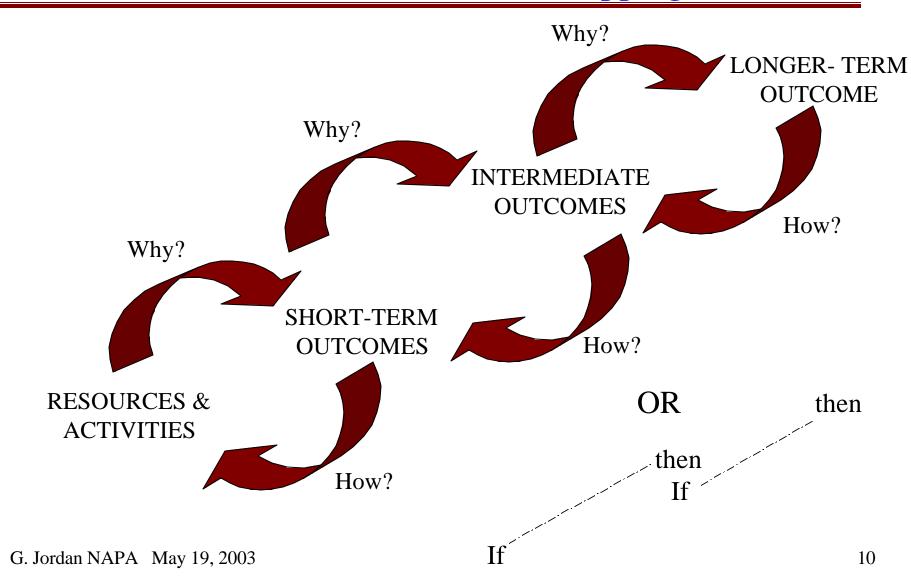
Step 2. Define the problem the program addresses and the context. Start with the big picture.



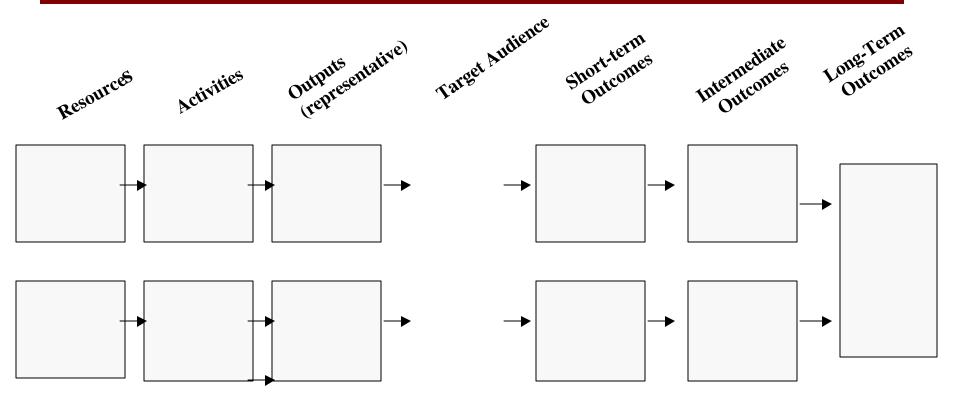
Step 3. Define the elements in a table.

| | - HOW | - | WHO | WHAT and WHY Outcomes | | | |
|-----------|----------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Resources | Activities | Outputs | Customers Reached | Short Term | Intermediate Term | Long Term | |
| | | | | | Program outcomes related to factor(s) | Program impact on the problem | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 4 | | 4 | 4 | | |
| Extern | al Influences: | | | | | | |

TOOL: Do Forward (Why? If-Then?) and Backwards (How?) Mapping



One format for a simple logic model



EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Source: Jordan 2001

How and why we do program evaluation and performance measurement

HOW We Conduct a Performance Based Management Process

We use these ➤ For these To produce activities... these resources... outputs... • Request for • Plan · PBM plan and Performance Conduct documentation based

 Monitor & **Evaluate**

management

Accessible

resources to

necessary

alliances

support PBM,

including staff,

(PBM)

- Communicate. and
- Improve
- the PBM system funds, knowledge,
- Strategic plans, road maps, and

- · Budgets and budget documents
- Performance contracts
- Program monitoring and evaluation studies
- Performance Reports
- Performance Plans



For these

people...

"Customer" Internal and External Audiences

WHY We Conduct a Performance **Based Management Process**

So they can change in -Which leads — ► Leading to these ways... to these these results outcomes...

- Customers become more knowledgeable
- Uncertainties are reduced
- They may change their attitude about programs
- · Customer behavior may change including decisions to act on program information in strategic planning, performance planning, contracting, and reporting, and budget formulation

As appropriate, program activities that work are sustained, those that do not work are improved, and new activities are added

The probability of program success is enhanced.

Stakeholders have a more positive image of the program.

Internal and External Contextual Factors That Can Influence Success of the **Performance Based Management System (Mediators)**

Including: Nature of the programs and outcomes, Complexity of organizational structure, Lack of data, Multiple stakeholder perspectives

Focus the evaluation design – five forms of evaluation

- Proactive
- Clarificative
- Interactive
- Monitoring
- Impact

Owen with Rogers, Program Evaluation: Forms and Approaches, 1999

Proactive evaluation (formative, prospective)

- When: before the program begins
- Orientation: Synthesis, to assist with planning decisions about what type of program that is needed
- Major focus: Program context
- Typical issues: Is there a need? What do we/others know about the problems to be addressed? Best practices?
- Major approaches:
 - Needs assessment or analysis
 - Research/literature review
 - Review of best practice, creation of benchmarks
- Assembly of evidence: Review of documents/databases, site visits, other interactive methods such as focus groups, delphi technique

Clarificative evaluation

- When: during program development
- Orientation: Clarification
- Major focus: All elements
- Typical issues: What are intended outcomes and how is program designed to achieve them? Underlying rationale? Plausible? Elements to be modified? What to assess?
- Major approaches:
 - Evaluability assessment
 - Logic/theory development
 - Accreditation
- Assembly of evidence: Combination of document analysis, interview and observation

Interactive evaluation

- When: during program development
- Orientation: Improvement
- Major focus: Delivery
- Typical issues: What is program trying to achieve? Is delivery working, consistent with plan? How could program or organization be changed to be more effective?
- Major approaches:
 - Responsive

-- Developmental

Action research

-- Empowerment

- Quality review
- Assembly of evidence: Relies on intensive onsite studies, including observation. May involve providers and program participants

Monitoring evaluation

- When: once program has settled
- Orientation: Justification/fine tuning
- Major focus: Delivery and outcomes
- Typical issues: Is program reaching target population? Is implementation meeting benchmarks? Differences across sites, time? How/what can be changed to be more efficient, effective?
- Major approaches:
 - Component analysis
 - Devolved performance assessment
 - Systems analysis
- Assembly of evidence: Requires availability of management information systems, meaningful use of indicators and other performance information

Impact evaluation (summative, retrospective)

- When: after a program has settled
- Orientation: Justification/accountability
- Major focus: Delivery/ outcomes
- Typical issues: Program implemented as planned? Stated goals achieved? Needs served? Can you attribute goal achievement to program? Unintended outcomes? Cost effective?
- Major approaches:
 - Objectives based

-- Goal free evaluation

Process-outcome studies

- -- Performance audit
- Assembly of evidence: Preordinate research designs perhaps with control groups, tests and other quantitative data; for all outcomes, more exploratory and qualitative

Gather credible evidence – tips on data collection

- Develop a data collection plan
 - For each question, have a strategy that includes method, source, sample selection (if applies)
 - Remember one strategy may apply to more than one question
 - Set data quality expectations for accuracy, completeness, consistency, currency
 - Have a system to ensure quality
 - Standardize definitions
 - Acceptance/edit criteria
 - Integrated data system
 - Lay out a schedule
- It is best practice to gather from multiple sources

Justify conclusions - tips on data analysis

- Develop an initial plan
- Take at least as much time for analysis as you took to collect data
- Analysts and those using the analysis need have some training in methods
- Analysis occurs throughout the cycle, not just at the end
- Analysis procedures (description, correlation, comparison) depend on the level of data (nominal, ordinal, etc.) and type of question
- Analysis is best done collaboratively
- Creative insights are key

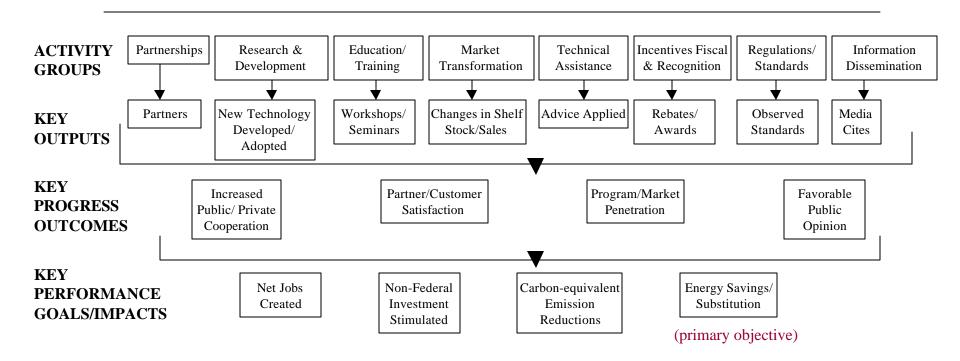
Ensure use and share lessons learned - tips on display and reporting

- Effective data presentation fits
 - Audience and intended use
 - Underlying nature of data and any assumptions
- Target multiple audiences. Find opportunities to present
- Simplify. Pare ruthlessly to key points
- Tailor to audience. Use examples
- Stay focused on bottom line possible actions
- Report in many different ways (written, briefing, video)
- Use powerful graphics
- Make helpful recommendations

Source: M. Hendricks in *Handbook of Practical Evaluation*

Climate Wise was one of more than 20 programs in the Climate Change Action Plan

Figure 1. Corporate Performance Map Energy Partnership for a Strong Economy (Climate Change Actions) Final Draft 10/94



Example
Table 2. Multiple Methods Used to Address Evaluation Questions

| Evaluation Methods | Program Progress/Shorter Term Outcomes | | | | | | Program Perform | mance on Goals | |
|--|--|------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| | Partnerships | | | Program-Specific | | Non- Federal Investment | Energy Savings/ Substitution | Carbon Equiv. Emission Savings | Jobs Created |
| | Number, type | Cost-share | Satisfaction | Milestones/ Targets Met | Technical Goals Met | | | 8 | |
| Macro Model Estimates (IDEAS model) | | | | Х | | Х | Χ. | X. | |
| Micro Model Estimates (AMIGA, REACT) | | | | | | | | х | х |
| Self-reporting by Partners (1605(b), etc.) | х | х | X | | | х | х | Х | X (indirect) |
| Audits, Engineering Estimates, billing data, metering | | х | | х | | | х | | |
| Case Studies | | | | X | х | х | Х | | X (direct) |
| Surveys | х | | х | | | | | | Х |
| Ongoing Review Monitoring by Manager/Partner | Х | х | Х | Х | Х | Х | | | |
| Independent or Expert Review | | | | х | X | | х | | |
| Official Statistics (e.g. units sold) | | | | х | | | | | |

Evaluation Standards: Utility Serve the information needs of users

- State purpose of the evaluation clearly
- Consider audience(s) types of information each requires and find credible
- Communicate findings plan ahead
- Provide value either new information or confirming existing

Evaluation Standards: Feasibility Be practical, realistic, diplomatic, frugal

- Practical plan so don't disrupt the program
- Realistic— can implement as planned on time, on budget
- Prudent Benefits outweigh the costs
- Diplomatic, politically viable consider barriers to implementation, consequences of use and misuse

Evaluation Standards: Propriety Behave legally, ethically, with respect

- Respect people and their rights informed consent, Review Boards
- Disclose findings properly
- Assess completely and fairly

Evaluation Standards: Accuracy Reveal and convey accurate information

- Describe the program being evaluated and its implementation (don't evaluate something you don't know!)
- Explain evaluation procedures
- Demonstrate defensible information sources
- Ensure valid and reliable information
- Use appropriate analysis
- Draw justified conclusions
- Report impartially

Evaluation is thought to be: Evaluation can be:

Expensive..... Cost-effective

Time-consuming...... Strategically timed

Tangential..... Integrated

Technical..... Accurate

Not Inclusive..... Engaging

Academic..... Practical

Punitive..... Helpful

Political..... Participatory

Useless...... Useful

CDC Evaluation Working Group